



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  

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BIRMINGHAM

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**THE TRAINING  
AND SELECTION OF READERS**

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October 2017

## **WHAT IS A READER?**

Readers are lay people who have been selected and trained for a particular ministry in the Church of England. They are authorised by the Bishop to:

Preach and teach the faith; give pastoral care; lead public worship.

They are not ordained and do not preside at the Sacraments.

They give their services voluntarily.

Readers are licensed to work in a particular parish and may also preach and take services in other parishes on request. As well as through preaching, they are likely to nurture the faith of others through leading or assisting in bible studies, home groups and Christian basics groups. They may also be involved in teaching in Sunday children's groups and confirmation classes, working with young people and leading youth work. They usually assist in pastoral work which may include visiting, counselling, comforting and taking funerals and thus showing the love and care of God and the church to those in need.

Readers are men and women who feel that God is calling them to serve the Church in some of these ways. Readers come from a wide range of occupations and backgrounds and bring the rich experience of their work and life in the community to the teaching, worship and pastoral life of the church. Their experience of the secular world enables them to be in touch with, and sympathetic to, the situations which arise in everyday life.

The strength and uniqueness of a Reader's ministry stems from their lay status. As lay people, trained in biblical and theological studies, Readers have their own particular contribution to make. They are not a supplementary ministry, ready to step in when the Priest is absent, but have a distinct ministry of their own. Many Readers serve as Chaplains in the wider community: in industry and commerce, and in the health services. Reader ministry is not a back door to ordination. Readers exercise a complementary ministry and, in a parish or group, they form part of the ministry team together with the clergy and other laity.

## **IS THIS FOR ME?**

Are you

- a confirmed and regular communicant member of the Church of England?
- keen to communicate your Christian faith?
- willing to train as a lay minister?

If you believe that God may be calling you to Reader ministry, it is important to explore this sense of calling with others. You will need to consider prayerfully the gifts that you have been given, the opportunities you have to serve, and the needs within your own Parish.

You should discuss all this with your Vicar at an early stage. You may also wish to talk to another Reader, your 3D tutor, and your friends and family. (Reader training and ministry would have huge implications for them too).

If you decide to explore this call, you will need to apply for selection for training. The Vicar and PCC of your church will be asked to confirm that they support you in your application.

### **SAFEGUARDING**

Birmingham Diocese is committed to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults from physical, emotional, sexual, financial and spiritual abuse. Readers are trained in Birmingham Diocese only when they have completed the necessary check with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Incumbents, Lay Referees and 3D Referees are required to complete the Safeguarding Declaration which forms an integral part of the application process. Any questions regarding Safeguarding should be addressed to the Warden of Readers.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

There is a Selection day which usually takes place in June each year.

Before you can go the Selection day you must have done the 3D course or equivalent, or have a degree or diploma in Theology. You can get information about the 3D course from the Bishop's Adviser for Lay Adult Education and Training (see Useful Contacts page). You should also consult the Adviser (who is also Director of Reader Training) if you think you have already completed a course equivalent to the 3D course, or have a degree or diploma in Theology.

From November onwards, each year, you can send for an application pack from the Initial Training Secretary (see Useful Contacts page). This is for the Selection day which takes place the following June.

In the application pack you will find:

<b>Application Form</b>	This is for you to fill in.
<b>Incumbent's Nomination</b>	You will need to discuss this with your Vicar.
<b>Role Description</b>	Your vicar indicates how your ministry will be used in the Parish.
<b>Lay person's reference</b>	A lay person from your parish writes in support of your application.
<b>Tutor's reference</b>	Your 3D tutor should be asked to complete this form.
<b>PCC Statement</b>	The PCC's support for your application. Your Vicar will need to get this on to the PCC Agenda.

You will see that references are needed from your Incumbent, a Lay member of your parish and your 3D tutor. The PCC of your church must also support the application. In order to consider the matter in depth, they will probably need a preliminary discussion at one meeting and make a final decision later. You must ensure that all of the forms are completed and sent in by 7<sup>th</sup> April, so most parishes will need to begin this process no later than February. Having received the support of your referees you will be invited to attend the selection conference.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE SELECTION DAY?**

### **The Selectors will be looking for someone who:**

- can speak of their own sense of calling to ministry and mission.
- has a personal commitment to Christ, wishes to deepen their understanding and wants to share the Gospel with others.
- has a regular pattern of corporate and individual prayer and worship to sustain them in their daily lives.
- is able to offer leadership in the church community and beyond, and fulfil the demanding role of a minister within the local church.
- has a willingness to cooperate with other ministers, to work within a team, and can form strong pastoral relationships within the community they serve.
- is willing to engage in a method of training which is participatory, reflective, imaginative, and creative.

At the Selection day you will have three interviews with Selectors (some are Readers and some are Clergy). There will be a pastoral exercise to do during the day, and in the afternoon group exercises will take place. Unlike other recruitment exercises, at the Selection day you are not in competition with other candidates nor is there a quota on the training places available. The Selectors will make their decision at the end of the day and candidates will be notified of the outcome within 10 days.

## **Following the Selection day successful candidates begin the Initial Reader Training Course.**

The course begins in the Autumn and lasts for one year.

The training includes:

- Biblical and theological study
- Practical skills for preaching, teaching, leading worship and pastoral care.

Above all, it is a time for shaping you so that you are ready for a new role in representative ministry on behalf of the Church. It is important that you have a chance to learn more about yourself, and about the demands of public ministry.

**THE COURSE** meets at 1 Colmore Row in the City Centre on Tuesday evenings and occasional Saturdays. In the Autumn there is also a residential training weekend (Saturday morning - Sunday tea time).

**IN YOUR HOME PARISH**, you will be asked to practise new roles in preaching and leading worship. During the training year you will prepare sermons and preach four of them during Sunday services in your own Church. You will also help to lead worship at least once in your own church.

**IN A PLACEMENT CHURCH** During the summer you will undertake a placement in a church other than your home church, to learn about the parish and their policies for ministry and mission and to practice some ministerial skills, including preaching one sermon.

In all this you will have the guidance of a Tutor and your Incumbent, (and your supervisor in your placement church) and they will work closely together to support your training and give you feedback on your progress. You will also be part of the whole training group, and a smaller tutorial group, where the shared experience of prayer and learning will help you through a demanding year.

## **WHAT WOULD THIS MEAN FOR ME?**

INITIAL READER TRAINING IS AN INTENSIVE YEAR and everyone who embarks on it needs to plan carefully how they will be able to do it alongside their other commitments.

- Your Church will be asked to release you from other responsibilities so that you can give enough time and energy to your training (and if you are a Church Warden, you must give up this office before you **begin** Initial Reader training). The training will also affect your family and colleagues, and you should talk with them about their expectations and your plans.
- The course begins in late September/early October and runs right through to the following September, with short breaks for Christmas and Easter and a longer break in July and August. You will be expected to attend all the training sessions. There are 32 Tuesday evenings from 7-9.30pm., three Saturdays, and a residential weekend in the autumn.
- You will also need, on average, 5 hours a week of study time at home. During the summer break this extra study time is needed to complete your placement and a brief report that you will write about it.
- There are no exams or written tests, but there is a continuous process of assessment in which you and your Tutor, and eventually your Incumbent and the Director of the course, together discern how you are growing into this new role. After the last meeting of the course in September the final assessment process takes another two months, and no-one can be presented to the Bishop for licensing as a Reader until it is agreed that he/she is ready.
- You or your parish will need to allow for some travelling expenses, and the cost of some books.
- There are no exams or written tests, but there is a continuous process of assessment in which you and your Tutor, and eventually your Incumbent and the Director of the course, together discern how you are growing into this new role. After the last meeting of the course in September the final assessment process takes another two months, and no-one can be presented to the Bishop for licensing as a Reader until it is agreed they are ready.
- Reader Training is provided free of charge. You or your parish will need to allow for some travelling expenses, and the cost of some books.

## **WORKING AND LEARNING AGREEMENT**

In order to enable a clear collaborative arrangement for the practice and development of ministry as a Reader we now offer an outline 'Working and Learning Agreement'. The intention is that Reader and Incumbent (or, in a chaplaincy, the Lead Chaplain) sit down together to describe the shape of the Reader's ministry and their understanding of it. Through the discussion and drafting of the Agreement expectations are clarified and training needs are more specifically set out. Frequency of meetings, expectations about time and commitment in parish and place of work, expenses paid and so on can all be included. Those who have successfully completed Initial Training are required to complete a Working and Learning Agreement with their Incumbent prior to Licensing. For those already licensed as Readers, application for this outline is made to the Warden of Readers, who is also able to discuss details.

## **WHAT IS THE READER'S LICENCE?**

The Reader's Licence gives you authority from the Bishop to work as part of the ministerial team in a particular parish. There is a Readers' service at the Cathedral in January each year, when those who have successfully completed the training are admitted to the Office of Reader in the Church of England and receive their licences from the Bishop.

## **THE READERS' ASSOCIATION**

On becoming licensed, you will automatically become a member of the Readers' Association. The association not only regulates the practice of Reader Ministry but with the guidance of the of other Readers offers help and support to Readers themselves.

## CONTINUING TRAINING FOR READERS

**'Next'** is a required programme of further training for newly licensed Readers. The programme involves 5 meetings during the first 18 months after licensing. It is made up of a series of 6 modules which are designed to encourage the ongoing development of ministry in a supportive environment.

### Continuing Ministerial Education (CME)

We offer regular training days for all Readers in the diocesan CME programme.

## HOW LONG DOES IT ALL TAKE?

3D Course	September – June
Application Packs available	November onwards
Completion of forms	December – March
Closing date for applications	7 <sup>th</sup> April 2018
Selection day	9 <sup>th</sup> June 2018
Initial Reader Training Course	September/October 2018 - September 2019
Assessment	October – November 2019
Licensing Service	January 2020
NEXT Programme	January 2020 –June 2021

## **WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

For details of the application process please contact a member of the Initial Training Administration Team.

For questions relating to the Selection procedure or for the opportunity to discuss your situation with an experienced Reader, please contact the Warden of Readers or the Secretary of the Readers' Association.

For any questions about the training course please contact the Bishop's Adviser for Lay Adult Education and Training.

For queries about the 'Next' programme please contact the Programme Coordinator.



## The Five Guiding Principles

In July 2014 legislation was passed to enable women to be consecrated to the episcopate in the Church of England. This means that the Church of England is now fully committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender. The Church of England also remains committed to ensuring that those who cannot receive the ministry of women priests or bishops are able to flourish. The House of Bishops has therefore agreed *Five Guiding Principles* as the basis for this mutual flourishing. The House of Bishops confirm that the *Principles* need to be read 'one with the other and held in tension, rather than being applied selectively.' The *Five Guiding Principles* are:

- Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;
- Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;
- Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;
- Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and
- Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

As with those training for ordination, we ask that those offering for Reader Ministry within Church of England, Birmingham also confirm that they assent to all five of these *Principles*. Please sign in the relevant place on your application papers to confirm that you do assent to all five *Principles*.

You will be asked again for your assent to these *Principles* by the Director of Reader Training when you come to the end of your training. This is asked for in order to provide an assurance for your Bishop.

**Adapted from Guidance for Candidates for Ordination in the Church of England issued by Ministry Division Stephen Ferns November 2014**

## USEFUL CONTACTS

### **Warden of Readers**

The Revd Canon Catherine Grylls  
18 Pineapple Grove  
Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2TJ  
Email: readers@cofebirmingham.com  
Tel: 0121 443 1371

### **Secretary of the Readers' Association**

Mr Michael Lynch  
57 Fairholme Road  
Hodge Hill, Birmingham B36 8HN  
Email: mike4jeannie@blueyonder.co.uk  
Tel: 0121 242 0534

### **Bishop's Adviser for Lay Adult Education & Training and Director of Reader Training**

The Revd Liz Howlett  
The Church of England  
1 Colmore Row  
Birmingham B3 2BJ  
Email: lizh@cofebirmingham.com  
Tel: 0121 426 0400

### **Initial Training Administration Team**

Mrs Juliet Bakker  
5 Chestnut Grove  
Coleshill  
Birmingham B46 1AD  
Email: initial.readertraining@yahoo.com  
Tel: 01675 465739

Mr Ian Crockford  
62 Lakey Lane  
Hall Green  
Birmingham B28 9DS  
Tel: 0121 777 2890

### **'Next' Programme Coordinator**

The Revd Canon Helen Hingley  
4 Adrian Croft  
Moseley  
Birmingham B13 9YF  
Email: h.hingley@btinternet.com  
Tel: 0121 777 2171

**Birmingham Readers' Association  
website:**

[www.birminghamreaders.org](http://www.birminghamreaders.org)